

except longleaf pines perhaps 2-3 years ago. After the harvest, a burn was conducted, and smoke from the burn was still evident on the site visit, even though the cleared area was mostly vegetated in herbaceous species. Widely scattered longleaf pines 40-60' tall are present, though none appear old enough to produce cones. A few of the pines have been killed by the fire. The ground contains somewhat weedy native species – seedlings of red maple and sweetgum; winged sumac (*Rhus copallina*), blackberry (*Rubus argutus*), dog-fennel (*Eupatorium capillifolium*), toadflax (*Linaria canadensis*), pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*), horseweed (*Conyza canadensis*), broomsedge (*Andropogon* sp.), and others.

PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT: This natural area is owned by Progress Energy (Carolina Power & Light Company). It has been leased to North Carolina State University to manage for re-establishment of longleaf pine and the Piedmont Longleaf Pine Forest community. When the management of the site is farther along, with seedling longleaf pines established, there may be a need to discuss protection in terms of a Registry of Natural Heritage Areas agreement. However, the site is still undergoing active management, so it appears best not to be concerned with Registry in the interim.

Both N.C. State University and Progress Energy are actively involved with the management of the site. A 135-acre site was burned in the fall of 1998, and the natural regeneration harvest to release longleaf pine was done in 1999. There will be periodic burning of the study tract, and monitoring/sampling plots have been established by the N.C. Vegetation Survey program (Gary Blank, pers. comm.).

The cleared area should be burned frequently (every 2-3 years at the longest) in order to keep sweetgums, loblolly pines, and other trees from invading the site. It is recommended that no further clearcutting be done in the natural area surrounding the cleared study area. However, this surrounding area could be burned in the winter. Or, there could be thinning of some trees surrounding the longleaf pines, yet keeping the area still in a forested condition. Re-introduction of other plants characteristic of this natural community might be considered; wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*) is found at a few such Piedmont sites elsewhere, though it might be difficult and labor-intensive for establishment of this grass.

NATURAL COMMUNITIES: Piedmont Longleaf Pine Forest

REFERENCES:

LeGrand, H.E., Jr. 2002. Site survey report: Harris Lake – Longleaf Pine Forest. N.C. Natural Heritage Program, DPR, DENR, Raleigh.